

So I want to thank these distinguished citizens of the country for being here, people who brought class and distinction when they held power and set a good legacy for those of us who follow.

Thank you.

Mr. Ambassador, do you want to say something?

*Former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Robert Strauss.* I want to say, all of us are delighted to be here, and all of us are pleased that the President extended this invitation. I think that the

group not only is appreciative, but they've tried to be responsible to the discussion.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, how do you square your decision—how do you square your decision, Mr. President to—

*The President.* I'm not sure. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:25 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to William H. Gray III, president, United Negro College Fund. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement to Participants in the March for Life January 22, 2001

Good afternoon, friends and fellow citizens. Two days ago, Americans gathered on the Washington Mall to celebrate our Nation's ideals. Today, you are gathered to remind our country that one of those ideals is the infinite value of every life.

I deeply appreciate your message and your work. You see the weak and defenseless, and you try to help them. You see the hardship of many young mothers and their unborn children, and you care for them both. In so many ways, you make our society more compassionate and welcoming.

We share a great goal: to work toward a day when every child is welcomed in life and protected in law. We know this will not come easily, or all at once. But the goal leads us onward: to build a culture of life, affirming that every person, at every stage and season of life, is created equal in God's image.

The promises of our Declaration of Independence are not just for the strong, the

independent, or the healthy. They are for everyone—including unborn children. We are a society with enough compassion and wealth and love to care for both mothers and their children, to seek the promise and potential in every human life.

I believe that we are making progress toward that goal. I trust in the good hearts of Americans. I trust in the unfolding promise of our country—an expanding circle of inclusion and protection. And I trust in the civility and good sense of our citizens—a willingness to engage our differences in a spirit of tolerance and good will.

All of you marching today have never tired in a good cause. Thank you for your conviction, your idealism, and your courage. May God bless you all.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.